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ABSTRACT

A significant increase in secondary psychology instruction in Ohio over the last decade led to initiation of state certification in psychology. At the same time national interest in precollege psychology was evident in the activities of the American Psychological Association and other groups. In spring, 1973, an Ohio survey of teacher training in psychology elicited thirty-one responses from fifty-eight likely institutions, sixteen of which indicated active training programs. The data profile included the following facts. Though small, the majority of programs were preparing both majors and minors in psychology. Of the required subjects, the majority included statistics and testing, reinforcing a scientific orientation to psychology. Difficulty in student teaching arrangements did arise from scarcity of full-time psychology teachers, but teacher placement was no more difficult than normal. The only disconcerting data collected was that the number of hours required for a major in psychology was marginal, considering the accumulated implications of upgraded standards. (JH)

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Colleges Revisited: Programs for the Preparation of High School Psychology Teachers

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The last decade has witnessed some rather extensive changes in secondary psychology instruction in the State of Ohio. First, in the five year period from 1966 - 1971 there was a sevenfold increase in high school psychology course offerings in Ohio with a concomittant increase in student enrollment from 3400 to 17,600 (Schumacher, 1971). Second in January of 1972 the State Department of Education initiated certification requirements for teachers of psychology, an important step in improving the level of psychological instruction at the secondary level. Third, evidence from a survey of Ohio high schools offering psychology indicates that these schools think psychology instruction is important and support that statement with an indication of willingness to hire teachers of psychology and to provide locations for practice teaching (Schumacher, 1972).

At the same time that these changes have been going on at the state level considerable change has occurred at the national level. The American Psychological Association now has an active committee on precollege psychology, has put out some useful resource books for high school teachers, is actively setting up contacts with state groups interested in psychology instruction and has its own organ for communication of ideas and information (Periodically). In addition various national funding agencies have been actively supporting instruction in secondary psychology with the National Science Foundation alone funding four summer institutes

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or short courses for psychology teachers during the summer of 1973. Finally at least one new journal has appeared in the last year with a specific orientation to high school social science teachers (Behavioral and Social Science Teacher).

This catalogue of recent events suggests a bright future for psychology instruction at the secondary level. However such a future depends on a continued influx of new, well-trained teachers into the high schools. These teachers will be needed to replace teachers who are retiring or teachers who are poorly trained in psychology, and to provide staffing for new psychology courses both in schools which currently teach psychology and those which currently do not.

Such an influx of teachers necessitates quality training programs for psychology teachers in teacher training institutes both in Ohio and throughout the country. The purpose of this paper is to report on the results of a survey of such psychology teacher training programs in Ohio. The following topics will be considered: the number of programs existing in the state, the characteristics of these programs, the type of training carried out and the placement results of these programs.

Before turning to these topics it is necessary to give some background information on the survey. During late spring, 1973, a three page short answer survey was prepared and mailed to the psychology departments of 58 four year colleges and universities in Ohio. These institutions included most of the four year schools in Ohio. Schools which were not included in the survey were primarily business schools of schools with special emphases such as art, music or religious studies. Some question arose as to the most appropriate department (psychology or education) to

contact within the various institutions. It was decided that more specific information regarding the programs and their difficulties could be obtained through the psychology departments. In a few cases the responses from the psychology departments indicated they had minimal contact with the program and suggested we contact either the educational psychology department or the department or college of education. Of the 58 survey forms sent out, thirty one were returned for a return rate of approximately 53 percent. The results reported in the remainder of the paper are based on these thirty one replies.

Number of Programs

Since state certification requirements have only been in existence two years and since psychology has not been a major secondary teaching field, it might be expected that few schools have established programs for the preparation of psychology teachers. This is surprisingly, not the case. Of the 31 responding institutions 16(52%) have a program already in operation while three more were either drawing up a program or considering a program. This situation would be even more striking if another factor were taken into account. Five of the 15 institutions which reported that they had no psychology training program indicated that they had no education programs at all and so were unauthorized to prepare teachers in any field. In addition three of the schools indicated they did not have the facilities or staff to offer such a program. Four institutions indicated that they had no demand or desire for such a program.

Characteristics of the Programs

A majority (9) of the 16 schools with programs have had their programs for a period of two years. Another three schools have had their programs for just one year. Some programs have been in existence longer than have

the state certification requirements (three for three years and one for five years). This is not especially surprising since psychology has been taught for some time in the high schools although certification has been established only recently.

The administration of the programs shows considerable diversity. In seven schools the program is jointly administered by the psychology department and education department while in five cases the education department is responsible for its administration. In four cases the psychology or educational psychology department administers the program. In any event it appears that the various psychology departments are quite active in the administration of the programs; this would appear to insure that content matters are appropriately considered.

Most of the programs are moderate to small in size with four having 6 - 10 students entering each year, four having 3 - 5 each year and two having less than three each year. Only one program could be labeled large with 16 - 20 students each year. A number of programs (five) reported that they have been in existence for too short a period of time to indicate a precise number of students although their estimated enrollments were similar to those above. It appears therefore that most programs are not planning on producing great numbers of teachers; perhaps a wise choice at the present time.

It is interesting to note that only one of the 16 schools with a training program places a limit on the number of students who enter that program. Although the establishment of limits may be premature, it would seem that schools would be wise to consider that there is not room for unlimited growth in high school psychology. Other fields which have failed

to accurately assess the number of teachers needed have produced far more teachers than positions.

Nature of Training

It is time now to consider the manner in which teachers are being prepared for high school psychology instruction. Probably the first point to be addressed is the question of "major" versus "minor". Are psychology teachers being prepared foremost in another area with psychology as an adjunct area or is psychology preparation the principal concern? Although it was anticipated that at first psychology preparation would be as a minor area such does not seem to be the case. Of the 16 responding schools with programs, five are preparing majors alone while seven are preparing both majors and minors. Only four schools are preparing minors alone. This is a good indication of the desire to train well-prepared psychology teachers.

Many of the institutions apparently think that students have a better chance of getting jobs if they are also prepared to teach in another area. Consequently procedures are employed to insure diversity of backgrounds. These include required second teaching fields and strong recommendations that a second teaching field be acquired. There seems to be no special effort to delineate specifically what that second teaching field should be. Respondents indicate as acceptable everything from social studies and English to physical sciences and mathematics. In the majority of cases the programs have been in existence for too short a period of time for any major trend to be established regarding which of these areas are chosen. There is some indication however that social studies or sociology will be frequently chosen second fields. This agrees with what high schools would like to see in the psychology teachers they hire

(Schumacher, 1972).

A question on the number of hours needed for a major in the psychology teaching programs provides some puzzling and possibly disconcerting information. While seven schools offering a major require 30 or more semester hours, four schools require less than 30 semester hours and two require less than 25 semester hours. This indicates that some students whose major teaching field is psychology may just be taking the minimum hours required by the state. The hours requirements for minor programs is more in line with expectation with most programs requiring 20 - 29 hours.

Looking more specifically at the psychology courses required of the teachers, the following pattern emerges. Fifteen schools require general psychology, 14 social, 12 statistics and testing, 11 personality/adjustment, 9 experimental, developmental and educational and 8 learning. Although it is difficult to draw many conclusions from this pattern, it is encouraging to see courses such as statistics and testing frequently required. This seems to indicate that the programs are strongly empirically and scientifically oriented.

Finally it is necessary to look at the student teaching procedures in the various programs. In ten of the programs student teaching is carried out in the area of psychology. In a few programs (2) students may student teach in some other field or occasionally (2) in both of the areas in which the student is to become certified. As might be expected from the small enrollments in the programs, there are at most ten students student teaching in any one program in a given year. The students are most frequently supervised by educational department faculty (11) while in a few cases (3) psychology department members are in charge of the super-

vision.

Apparently several schools (9) have had difficulty in finding places for their students to student teach. This is not surprising as relatively few schools are offering enough psychology courses to allow a student teacher to teach full time in psychology.

In concluding this section on the nature of the training, it is difficult to get an accurate determination at this time regarding the quality of teacher preparation. It is encouraging that many programs are "major" oriented but if the data is accurate regarding the number of hours required some programs may have marginal requirements.

Placement

Perhaps the most encouraging information to come from the survey comes from a question on placement. Although many of the programs are still very new and consequently the amount of placement data is small the reports from the schools show that most are able to place their students relatively well. Three schools indicated they were able to place their students easily, seven placed their students with average difficulty, one with difficulty and two said their students had not been placed. From this data it would appear that students prepared as psychology teachers are being placed in appropriate positions with no more than average difficulty.

This concludes the data from the survey of institutions preparing high school psychology teachers in Ohio. When this survey was initiated it was expected that few such programs would be in existence. As the above data indicates this is not the case. The fact that several programs exist speaks well for the future of high school psychology in Ohio. The one potentially disconcerting fact is that some programs may have marginal hours requirements for their students. However, the existence of several good psycho-

logy training programs is an important step in quality psychology instruction at the high school level. It is more than frosting on the cake that the students coming from these programs are working their way into secondary psychological instruction.

References

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